

CLAIMS:

1. A gas generator arrangement for inflating an air-bag in a motor vehicle, the gas generator arrangement comprising a first source of gas adapted to inflate the air-bag relatively rapidly, and a second source of gas adapted subsequently to provide a flow of gas to the air-bag over a relatively long period of time to maintain the air-bag in a substantially inflated state.

2. An arrangement according to Claim 1 wherein the first source of gas comprises a bottle of compressed gas adapted to communicate with the interior of the air-bag through a flow passage of relatively large diameter.

3. An arrangement according to Claim 1 or 2 wherein the second source of gas comprises a bottle containing compressed gas, the bottle communicating with the interior of the air-bag through a flow passage of relatively small diameter.

4. An arrangement according to Claim 2 or 3 wherein the first source comprises a bottle containing compressed gas, the bottle having an outlet port initially sealed by a membrane, means being provided on the exterior of the bottle in a supporting position to support the membrane and means being provided to remove the support from the supporting position in response to a signal from a sensor.

5. An arrangement according to Claim 4 wherein the means adapted to remove the support comprise a pyrotechnic charge adapted to generate gas and supply the gas to a

chamber defined at least partly by the support or means associated with the support.

6. An arrangement according to any one of Claims 3 or any Claim dependent thereon, wherein the gas bottle comprising the second source is connected to the gas bottle comprising the first source through a bore which comprises said flow passage of relatively small diameter.

7. An arrangement according to Claim 6 wherein the bore is initially sealed by means of a rupture or membrane adapted to rupture when a predetermined pressure differential exists across said membrane.

8. A gas generator arrangement according to any one of the preceding Claims in combination with an air-bag.

9. A gas generator arrangement according to Claim 8 wherein said air-bag comprises an air-bag mounted in position in a motor vehicle such that, when inflated, the air-bag is located between an occupant of the vehicle and a side part of the vehicle.

10. A method of inflating an air-bag in a motor vehicle, the method comprising the steps of initially supplying a substantial volume of gas to the interior of the air-bag to inflate the air-bag relatively rapidly and supplying, over a relatively long period of time, a subsequent flow of gas to maintain the air-bag in the substantially inflated state.

11. A method according to Claim 10 wherein the method comprises the steps of providing said substantial volume of gas from a first bottle containing compressed gas, and wherein the step of supplying the subsequent flow of gas is

accomplished by supplying gas from a second gas bottle through a relatively small diameter flow passage.

12. A method according to Claim 11 wherein the gas from the second gas bottle is supplied to the interior of the first gas bottle.

13. A gas generator arrangement for an air-bag in a motor vehicle substantially as herein described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawing.

14. A method of inflating an air-bag substantially as herein described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawing.

15. Any novel feature or combination of features disclosed herein.

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